

Training 3-2: Disclosure of Information Requirements



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss the Choice payment process, the pupil count reports, and the enrollment audits.

Disclosure of Information Requirements– Two Parts

1. Statutorily Required School Policies and Information

2. DPI Disclosure of Information Form, which includes:

- Board member signatures
- Statutorily required policies and Information

(Form and Required Policies and Information are due January 10 of the year the school begins to participate)

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All schools must meet the Disclosure of Information requirements to be able to participate in the program. There are two main parts of Disclosure of Information. In this training we will review each part of the Disclosure of Information in more detail and explain the academic standards requirement.

The first part of the Disclosure of Information is the statutorily required school policies and information that must be provided to school applicants and the department. The required policies and information cover your school's organizational structure, certain school policies, academic standards, and school governance. Private schools participating in the Choice program develop and implement these items based on guidelines in the statutes.

The second part of the requirement is completion and submission of the DPI Disclosure of Information Form. The DPI Form is found on our website and we have provided a link in the resources tab at the top of this training screen.

Part 1: Required School Policies and Information

Choice Schools must provide the policies and information:

- To each pupil, or the parent or guardian of each minor pupil, who applies to attend the school.
- Upon request by DPI, any pupil, or the parent or guardian of any minor pupil, who is attending or who applies to attend the private school.
- To DPI with the DPI Disclosure of Information Form and Policies the year the school begins to participate.

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The first part of the Disclosure of Information, the statutorily required school policies and information, must be provided to each Choice student or parent that applies to attend your school. Schools must also provide the policies and information upon request by DPI, a student or parent of a student who is attending the school.

To assist Choice schools on completing the required policies and information DPI has created the Disclosure of Information Template, which is found on the DPI's website. We have provided a link in the resources tab at the top of this training screen. Due dates for submission to DPI is provided on the Disclosure of Information Form.

Required School Policies & Information

Format for the required information for parents:

- DPI recommends using the Disclosure of Information Template
- Some schools provide a separate packet with all this information.
- Some schools include this information in their school's handbook.
- All information provided to parents must be consistent across all school documents and information.

There are many ways to provide the statutorily required policies and information to Choice parents.

DPI has created a Disclosure of Information Template and recommends using it to complete these requirements. The link to the Disclosure of Information Template is <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/school-reports>. Schools may create and provide the required school policies and information as a separate packet from existing school materials or schools may incorporate the required policies and information in the school's parent/student handbook.

Regardless of the format, it is required to be provided to all Choice parents who apply and upon request.

Required Information – Contact Information

All of the following information must be provided to parents:

- School name
- Address
- Telephone number of the private school
- Name of one or more contact persons at the school.
- The list of the names of the members of the school's governing body and of the school's shareholders, if any

This must match the list provided on the DPI Disclosure of Information form. Governing board member signature's and alternative addresses are required on the DPI form.

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All of the information on the following screens is required by statutes to be provided to Choice parents as part of your school's policies and information.

We will begin with the contact information. This must include the following: the name, address, telephone number of the private school, and a list of one or more contact persons at the school for Choice parents to call.

It must also include a list of names of all the members of the schools governing body or the school's shareholders, if any. This list of board members in the school's Disclosure of Information must match the list on the DPI's Disclosure of Information Form.

Required Information Cont'd – Organization Status

- A notice stating whether the private school is an organization operated for profit or not for profit.

Note: The school must specifically include a statement stating if the organization is operating for profit or not for profit.

- A copy of the school's 501(c)(3) certificate issued by the IRS, if the school is a nonprofit organization.
 - Do not include a copy of the school's Department of Revenue sales tax exemption status.
 - Do not include the application for 501(c)(3) status.

The school must specify with a statement in the required policies and information if the school is a nonprofit or for profit organization.

If the school is a nonprofit you must include a copy of the school's 501(c)(3) certificate issued by the Internal Revenue Service. The 501(c)(3) certificate is not the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's sales tax exemption certificate or the IRS application for tax exempt status. If the private school's name is not listed on the 501(c)(3) certificate you must also provide clear evidence that the school operates under or is affiliated with the entity listed on the IRS 501(c)(3) certificate. Evidence can be an organization directory, and Articles of Incorporation or Charter.

Please note schools may need to provide the school's 501(c)(3) certificate for other program requirements such as Choice school budget requirements or food programs.

IRS Certificate

Example of 501(c)(3) certificate issued by the IRS.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE P. O. BOX 2508 CINCINNATI, OH 45201	DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
Date: MAR 19 2001	Employer Identification Number: 55-1234567
SAMPLE ARTS ORGANIZATION 1234 SOUTH ARTS ROAD OREM, UT 84407	ESB: 09876543210987 Contact Person: JOHN SMITH Contact Telephone Number: (877) 833-3555 Accounting Period Ending: December 31 Foundation Status Classification: 509(a)(1) Advance Ruling Period Begins: November 30, 2000 Advance Ruling Period Ends: December 31, 2004 Admission Application: No
ID# 12345	

Dear Applicant:

Based on information you supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3).

Because you are a newly created organization, we are not now making a final determination of your foundation status under section 509(a) of the Code. However, we have determined that you are reasonably expected to be a publicly supported organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 509(b)(1)-(6)(vi).

Accordingly, during an advance ruling period you will be treated as a publicly supported organization, and not as a private foundation. This advance ruling period begins and ends on the dates shown above.

Within 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period, you must send us the information needed to determine whether you have met the requirements of the applicable support test during the advance ruling period. If you establish that you have been a publicly supported organization, we will classify you as a section 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) organization as long as you continue to meet the requirements of the applicable support test. If you do not meet the public support requirements during the advance ruling period, we will classify you as a private foundation for future periods. Also, if we classify you as a private foundation, we will treat you as a private foundation from your beginning date for purposes of section 507(d) and 4940.

Grantors and contributors may rely on our determination that you are not a private foundation until 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period. If you send us the required information within the 90 days, grantors and contributors may continue to rely on the advance determination until we make

Letter 1045 (00/00)

This is an example of a 501(c)(3) certificate or determination letter issued by the IRS. As we previously mentioned, if the private school's name is not listed on the 501(c)(3) certificate you must also provide clear evidence that the school operates under or is affiliated with the entity listed on the IRS 501(c)(3) certificate.

Required Policies– Application Appeals Process

The appeals process used if the private school rejects an applicant.

- Schools may only reject a student choice application if the student does not meet program requirements .
- Schools must conduct a random selection, if applicable, within one week of the end of the open application period and before the count date.

Therefore, there is a limited time for appeals.

Your school also needs to have a policy on how a private school's decision to reject a student application may be appealed.

Questions to consider: How does a parent submit an appeal? Must it be submitted to certain school staff and in a certain format? When must the appeal be submitted? How will the Choice parent be notified of the process and appeal decision?

If a student meets the income, residency and age requirements (and additionally for the Racine and Wisconsin Parental Choice Program the prior year school attendance requirement) you must accept the student's Choice application and include it in a random drawing, if applicable.

This means that schools can only reject a Choice student application if the application is received outside of the open application period, or if the Choice applicant does not meet the income eligibility requirements, residency requirements, age requirement, and the prior year school attendance requirement for WPCP and RPCP.

Schools participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, or MPCP, and the Racine Parental Choice Program, or RPCP, must conduct a random drawing prior to the next application period, within 60 days after the end of the application period, or prior to the next count date, whichever occurs first; therefore, we recommend that schools include a time line for requesting appeals by the Choice applicants. Schools in the statewide Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) will have DPI do the random drawing. WPCP schools will accept applications from the first weekday in February through the third Thursday in April and provide final verification to DPI by first weekday in May. Therefore WPCP schools will need to receive appeals soon after receipt of the parent's documentation.

Required Policies Cont'd – High School Diplomas

If your school issues high school diplomas, a copy of the private school's policy specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma. The criteria for granting a high school diploma must include:

- The pupil's academic performance,
- The recommendations of teachers, and
- Successful completion of the civics test.

Because Choice students may opt out of religious instruction, religious courses cannot be a requirement for graduation or grade promotion. The policy must address the opt-out provision indicating what courses the student could take in place of any required religious instruction.

All schools must also include the school's criteria for granting a high school diploma. If your school does not grant a high school diploma your required policies must include a statement that states the school does not grant a high school diploma.

If your school grants high school diplomas your school's policies must include the following criteria:

The pupil's academic performance,
Recommendation of teachers, and
The successful completion of the civic test.

Additionally, schools must make it clear in their policies and information that the Choice parent may opt his or her student out of religious activities, including religious instruction. Many schools may have religious instruction as part of their requirements for grade promotion or graduating from high school. The school's policy must indicate what courses, would replace any religious instruction if a parent opts his or her student out of religious activities.

Required Policies Cont'd – Non Harassment Policy

A copy of the non-harassment policy used by the private school, together with the procedures for:

- Reporting the incident
 - To whom should the student or parent report the harassment, and
 - In what format should the report be provided: verbal and/or written.
- Obtaining relief from harassment
 - This includes potential disciplinary actions that may be taken, and
 - Who is responsible for enforcing these actions.

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Another statutorily required school policy is the student non-harassment policy used by the private school.

The policy must list the school's procedures for reporting a harassing incident against a student. Questions schools should consider when writing the policy include:

- To whom should the parent or student report the harassment?
- What format should be used to report the incident? Should it be in writing?
- What steps would the person receiving the report take after an incident has been reported?
- How will the school follow up with the individuals involved?

The policy shall also include how the school will ensure the individual will be able to obtain relief from the harassment. This may include possible disciplinary action.

The policy must cover all types of harassment. Do not provide the non-harassment policy that the school provides to employees.

Required Policies Cont'd – Suspension and Expulsion and Appeal Procedures

The suspension and expulsion policies and procedures must include:

- Types of conduct that will result in a suspension or expulsion.
- Notice that will be provided to parents
- Possible consequences of the suspension or expulsion

Policy must also include the procedures for appealing a suspension or expulsion:

- Time frame for appeals
- To whom should the appeal be submitted
- In what format should the appeal be made: written or verbal
- How the appeal will be decided: when and by whom and how the decision will be communicated to the parent.

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Your school's Disclosure of Information must also include a copy of the school's suspension and expulsion policies and procedures for appealing a suspension or expulsion.

The school's policy must include what types of conduct could result in suspension or expulsion, when the parent will be provided notice and the consequences for being suspended or expelled.

The policy for suspension and expulsion must also include the procedures for appeal. The appeal procedure should include when appeals must be made and how appeals must be submitted. It should also include who will make the final decision, how the decision will be communicated to the parent and pupil and when the decision will be made.

Required Policies Cont'd – Transfer Coursework

A copy of School's policy for accepting and denying transfer credits or coursework:

- This requirement is for all schools, not just high schools.
- Must explain how the school will evaluate coursework and accept or deny the coursework or credits earned at another school.
- Indicate process for determining grade placement.

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Choice students may transfer to your school from another school. Under state law, your school must have a policy provided in the school's Disclosure of Information regarding your procedures for accepting or denying the credits or the coursework from other schools. This policy is not use to determine eligibility; if a student meets eligibility requirements the student has an accepted application. This policy is also not about academic performance being used to determine eligibility or acceptance to a choice school. The Transfer of Credits Policy should explain *how your school will accept or deny credits or coursework* completed by the student at another school and *how your school will determine grade placement* for a student when a student meets Choice eligibility requirements.

All school's must have this policy, not just high schools.

Required Policies Cont'd – Visitor Policy

A copy of the policy governing visitors and visits to the school:

- Check-in procedure, if any.
- Limits on visitors or time for visiting, if any.
- Identification requirements, if any.

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The Disclosure of Information shall include the school's policy governing visitors and visits to the school. Schools must consider and explain how the school will manage visits. Items a school may want to consider when developing this policy include:

- Will the visitor have to enter the school at a particular entrance?
- Will the visitor have to check in at the main office?
- Will there be an ID required? Will the visit have a time limit?

Part 2: Disclosure of Information Form and Signatures

Each Choice school new to the program submit the Disclosure of Information Form.

- **First time participating** schools in the Choice programs, *other than new private schools*, are required to provide the form **by January 10** immediately preceding the school year in which they begin to participate.
- **New private schools**, which are *generally start-up schools*, are required to provide the form **by August 1** immediately preceding the school year in which they begin to participate.

A school first participating in the Choice program must complete the DPI Disclosure of Information form, attach all required policies and information and provide the form and attachment to DPI.

The form must be filled out completely with the original signatures from the Choice Administrator and each member of the school's governing board, if applicable. Schools must submit this form with the original signatures, and the required policies and information to DPI. Instructions for submission along with due dates is on the form. Please note there is a separate deadline for existing schools that are participating for the first time and a separate deadline for new private school (or start ups). To determine if your school is a new private school please see the school registration webpage; a link is provided in the resources tab.

The form also collects the signature and address of each school board member. The address should not be the school's address. The board member's address is used for communicating appeal rights to legal orders that may disqualify a school board member from working or volunteering at a Choice School. Additionally, upon new board member joining the school's governing body an individual will need to fill out the School Information Update Form to inform DPI that the individual is a member of the governing body.

We strongly recommend that your school plans in advance of the deadline to collect the required signatures of the school Choice administrator and all the school's governing board members, if applicable. Again, the deadline is located on the form. Failure to timely submit the required form, policies and information, and signatures may result in the school not being able to participate in the program. The school would be required to reapply the following year to be able to participated.

The DPI Disclosure of Information form and the Disclosure of Information Template is located in the School Submitted Reports and Forms tabs of the Choice webpage.

Additional Information – Academic Standards

By August 1 of the school's first school year participating in the program the school shall provide a copy of the academic standards adopted by the private school in mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography, and history to DPI:

- The private school may adopt the Pupil Academic Standards issued by the governor as Executive Order no. 326, dated January 13, 1998 (Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.)
- To meet this requirement, your school must submit a copy of the specific standards used by the school for the above listed subject areas. A general overview of activities that will take place is insufficient. Standards need to address what students in each grade should know and be able to do in each subject area.
- Schools must make Academic Standards available to parents upon request.

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Choice schools must also provide the academic standards adopted by the private school in all of the following subjects: mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography, and history. Each subject should be specifically listed and developed for each grade.

Standards are distinct from the curriculum or a program description that is used by the school. Do not provide the school's curriculum to DPI. Academic standards specify what students should know and be able to do in the classroom and must address what students are able to complete in each subject area. The standards must cover each grade for which the school teaches

Schools can meet this requirement by adopting the Pupil Academic Standards issued by the governor as Executive Order no. 326, dated January 13, 1998 (Wisconsin Model Academic Standards).

Schools will indicate the academic standards adopted by the school on its Disclosure of Information form. A school does not have to send DPI a copy of the academic standards if the school can provide a website link to the standards. If no link is available, the school must send a copy of the academic standards to the department. Remember academic standards must be provided to parents upon request.

Questions

Email: privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov

Toll Free: 1(888) 245-2732 ext. 3

Web Page: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs>

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Please feel free to contact us at the contact information above to discuss any questions or concerns you have about the information we have covered in this presentation and after you have reviewed the materials on our website.

I would encourage you to check the web page often, as we try to update with new information whenever applicable. You will be able to print out any of the forms or documents that are on the web page for your use and reference.